

**KEY ISSUES AND TRENDS:**

- The Colorado River provides the majority of Austin's water supply. The City has contracts to meet demand at least through 2050.
- The Edwards Aquifer, one of the most important and sensitive aquifers in Texas, feeds a number of springs in Austin, including Barton Springs and its pool. The aquifer underlies approximately 42 percent of the city's land area.
- Austin has a Drinking Water Protection Zone regulation for watersheds that drain to Lake Travis, Lake Austin, Lady Bird Lake, and Barton Springs.
- Central Texas is in compliance with all federal air quality standards. However, the region is in danger of exceeding ground-level ozone due to stricter federal standards.
- Farmland in Travis County decreased by 12 percent between 2002 and 2007 due to urbanization and farmland being taken out of production.
- In 2006, Austin's tree canopy cover was estimated at 30 percent of its total land area.
- The City is engaged in several programs to preserve sensitive lands, including purchasing land for water quality protection.
- In 2007, the City passed the Austin Climate Protection Plan resolution, committing the City of Austin to national leadership in the fight against global warming.
- Regional cooperation is needed to more completely implement climate change solutions.

**KEY CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE**

- Protecting Austin's watersheds, waterways, and water supply within Central Texas, one of the fastest growing regions in the country.
- Reducing the impact of development in environmentally sensitive watershed areas, particularly in areas affecting Barton Springs and the Edwards Aquifer.
- Improving regional planning and coordination to provide adequate water-related infrastructure and protect environmentally sensitive areas.
- Reducing the impact of development on creeks and water courses, mostly east of Interstate 35, prone to erosion and characterized by large floodplains.
- Monitoring and increasing Austin's tree canopy as urbanization occurs.
- Slowing the rate of farmland loss and protecting valuable agricultural land from development.
- Balancing growth and protection of our natural resources to create a future that is sustainable.
- Preserving land with sensitive environmental features and plant and animal habitats from development.



Cracking of soil due to drought conditions.

## CONSERVATION AND ENVIRONMENT POLICIES

**CE P1.** Permanently preserve areas of the greatest environmental and agricultural value.

(See also CFS P45)

**CE P2.** Conserve Austin’s natural resources systems by limiting development in sensitive environmental areas, including the Edwards Aquifer, its contributing and recharge zones, and endangered species habitat.

(See also LUT P21, LUT P22, CFS P45)

**CE P3.** Expand the city’s green infrastructure network to include such elements as preserves and parks, trails, stream corridors, green streets, greenways, and agricultural lands.

(See also LUT P23, LUT P34, CFS P47)

**CE P4.** Maintain and increase Austin’s urban forest as a key component of the green infrastructure network.

(See also LUT P23, LUT P34)

**CE P5.** Expand regional programs and planning for the purchase of conservation easements and open space for aquifer protection, stream and water quality protection, and wildlife habitat conservation, as well as sustainable agriculture.

(See also LUT P2, CFS P45)

**CE P6.** Enhance the protection of creeks and floodplains to preserve environmentally sensitive areas and improve the quality of water entering the Colorado River through regional planning and improved coordination.

(See also LUT P2, CFS P6, CFS P8, CFS P10, CFS P11, CFS P14)

**CE P7.** Protect and improve the water quality of the city’s creeks, lakes, and aquifers for use and the support of aquatic life. (See also CFS P6, CFS P8, CFS P10, CFS P11, CFS P14)

“The City in 2039 has made choices that protect the water (aquifer), trees, food, natural resources, land development, and the City is living within its means (GREEN!!) in regards to nonrenewable & renewable resources and safeguards sensitive areas for infrastructure or building...”

Community Forum Series #1 Participant responding to the question “How has the city improved by 2039?”



Green infrastructure, such as this drainage pond, retains rain water and reduces runoff, helping to improve groundwater quality, while reducing the need for unsightly concrete culverts and storm sewers.

### GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE DEFINED

The Conservation Fund defines green infrastructure as “strategically planned and managed networks of natural lands, working landscapes and other open spaces that conserve ecosystem values and functions and provide associated benefits to human populations.”

The elements of Austin’s green infrastructure network include our parks, the urban forest, urban trails, greenways, rivers, creeks, lakes, gardens, urban agriculture, open spaces, wildlife habitat, and stormwater features that mimic natural hydrology — and the relationships between them and the rest of the city.

#### BEST PRACTICE: URBAN FORESTRY | MINNEAPOLIS, MN

Started in 2004, the far reaching City of Minneapolis Urban Forest Policy coordinates efforts between multiple city departments, other governmental bodies, and the private sector. The purpose of the policy is “to preserve, protect, and improve the health and general welfare of the public by promoting the public benefit of saving, maintaining, and planting trees.” This policy is further reflected in the city’s comprehensive plan, the Minneapolis Plan, which emphasizes the importance of trees “to the quality of air, water, neighborhoods, and public spaces.” The policy directed changes to tree planting and care standards and directed regulatory changes relating to the care and maintenance of trees during construction and development.

Reference: <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/sustainability/grants/canopy/index.htm>.



Located in Northeast Austin, Pioneer Farms is a living history museum and functioning farm.

**CE P8.** Improve the urban environment by fostering safe use of waterways for public recreation, such as swimming and boating, that maintains the natural and traditional character of waterways and floodplains.

(See also CFS P46)

**CE P9.** Reduce the carbon footprint of the city and its residents by implementing Austin's Climate Protection Plan and developing strategies to adapt to the projected impacts of climate change. (See also CFS P5, CFS P9, CFS P22, CFS P23, CFS P34, CFS P38)

**CE P10.** Improve the air quality and reduce greenhouse gas emissions resulting from motor vehicle use, traffic and congestion, industrial sources, and waste. (See also LUT P15 - LUT P19, CFS P42, S P3, S P25)

**CE P11.** Integrate development with the natural environment through green building and site planning practices such as tree preservation and reduced impervious coverage and regulations. Ensure new development provides necessary and adequate infrastructure improvements. (See also LUT P34, HN P8, CFS P22)

**CE P12.** Adopt innovative programs, practices, and technologies to increase environmental quality and sustainability and reduce Austin's carbon footprint through the conservation of natural resources.

(See also CFS P9)

**CE P13.** Incent, develop, and expand the market for local and sustainable food, which includes such activities as farming, ranching, and food processing. (See also E P18, S P6, S P7)

**CE P14.** Establish policies that consider the benefits provided by natural ecosystems, such as ecological processes or functions in wetlands and riparian areas, that have value to individuals or society.

(See also CFS P16, CFS P17, CFS P19, CFS P20)

**CE P15.** Reduce the overall disposal of solid waste and increase reuse and recycling to conserve environmental resources.

(See also CFS P15, CFS P18, CFS P20)

**CE P16.** Expand and improve regional collaboration and coordination in preserving Central Texas' natural environment. (See also LUT P2, LUT P23, CFS P48)

#### BEST PRACTICE: URBAN AGRICULTURE GREENSGROW FARMS | PHILADELPHIA, PA

Greensgrow Farms is located in Philadelphia's New Kensington neighborhood on a previously vacant lot. In the summer of 1998, the owners transformed the former galvanized steel plant and Environmental Protection Agency clean-up site into a three-quarter-acre specialty hydroponic lettuce farm. The farm now produces a range of vegetables and flowers and supports a retail center for organic food and live plants. The business is profitable and provides employment opportunities for about six seasonal employees and five full-time employees. Reference: [www.greengrow.org](http://www.greengrow.org); Image courtesy of Greensgrow Farms.



Figure 4.8 Agricultural Resources

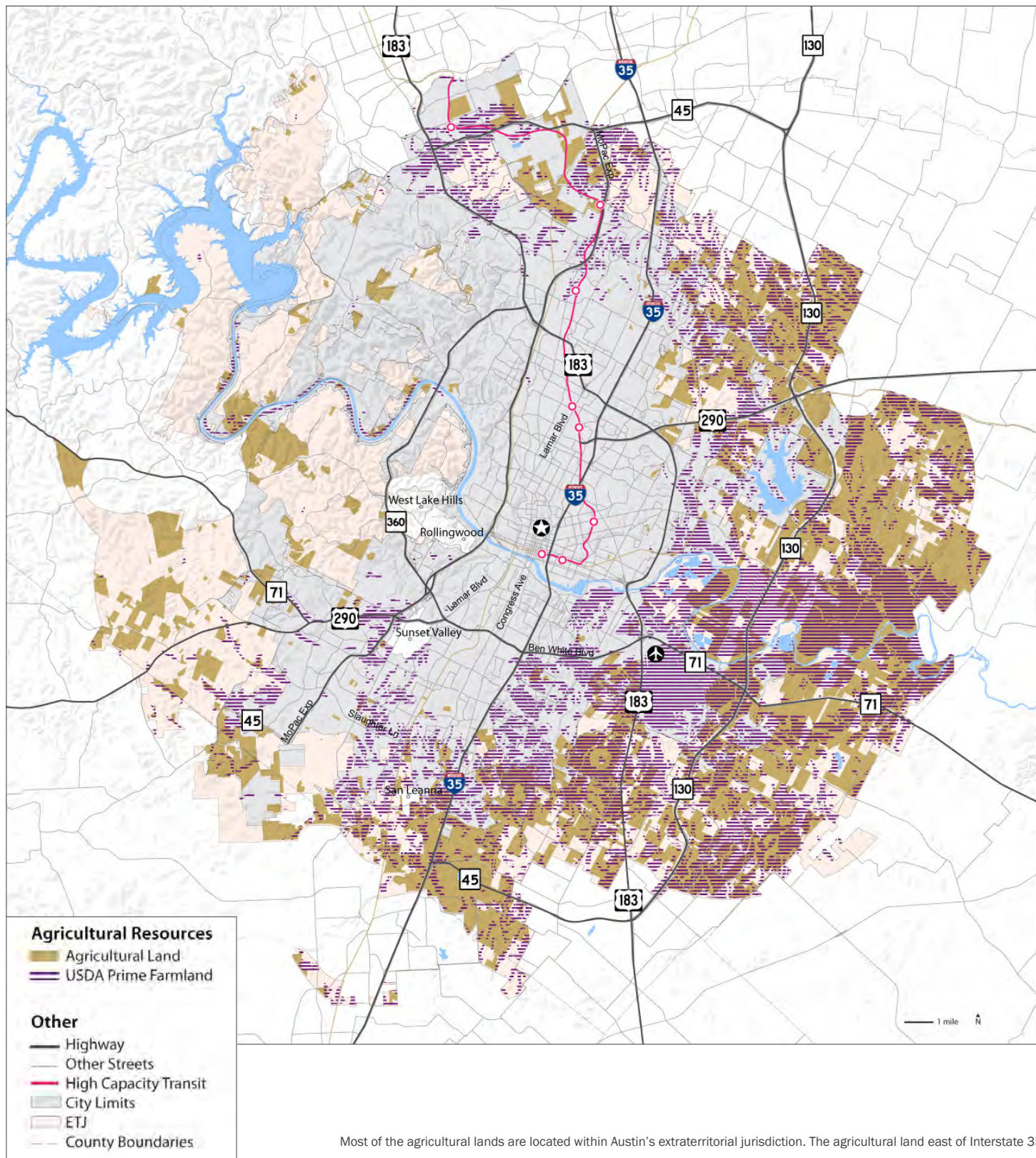


Figure 4.9 Species Habitats

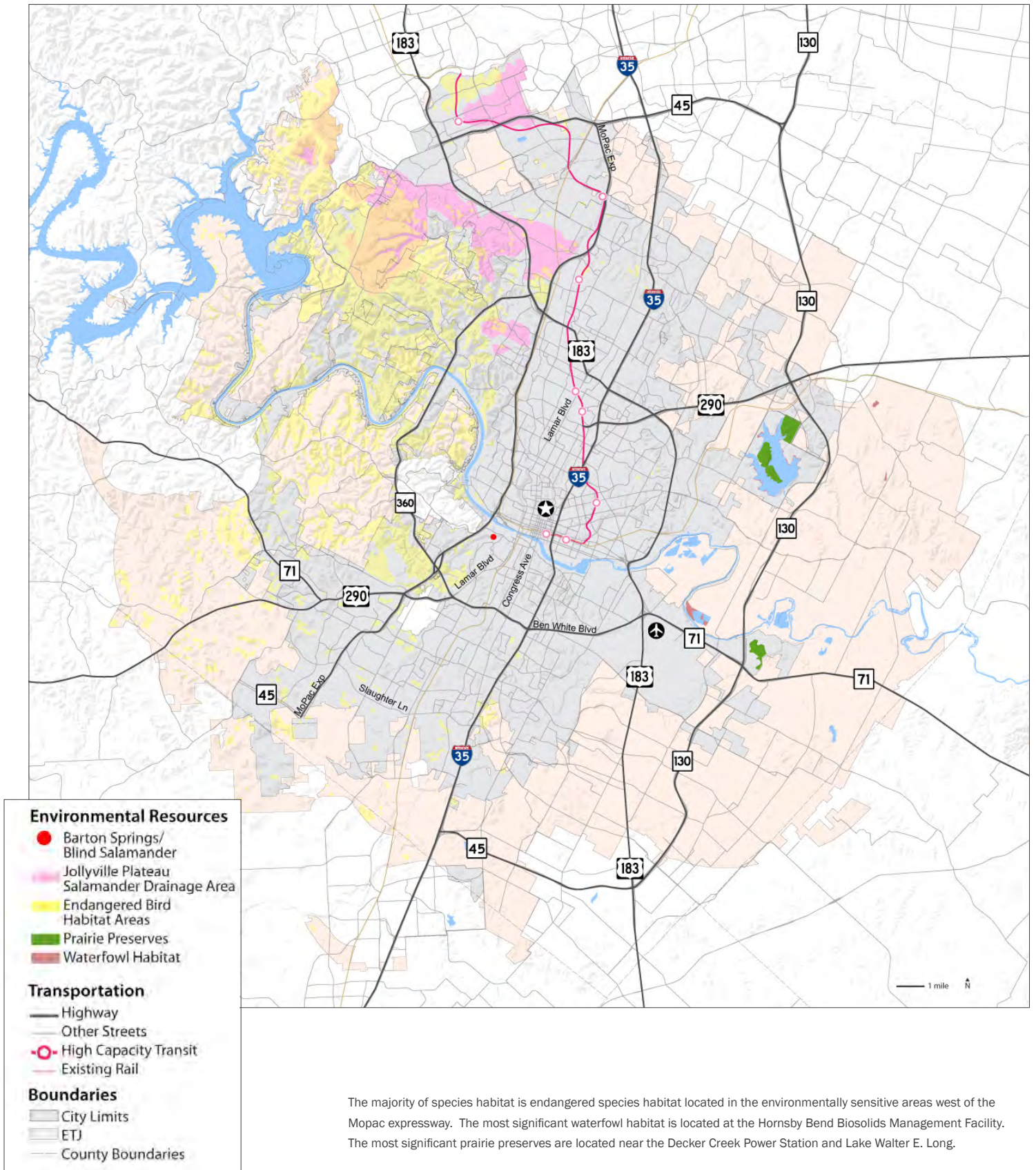


Figure 4.10 Tree Canopy and Restoration Areas





## CITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Complete Community Matrix



LIVABLE



NATURAL AND  
SUSTAINABLE



CREATIVE



EDUCATED



PROSPEROUS



MOBILE AND  
INTERCONNECTED



VALUES AND  
RESPECTS PEOPLE

City facilities and services include the infrastructure and services that underlie day-to-day life in Austin. They create and convey many of the necessities of modern life—electricity, transportation, solid waste collection, wastewater, drainage, and drinking water—and help define and shape our city. They also provide public safety, health and other services, and recreational opportunities for Austin's residents.

The City of Austin is comprised of approximately 30 departments and about 12,000 employees that provide direct services to residents and other departments. In addition to typical municipal services (such as police, fire, emergency, parks, libraries, solid waste, and streets), Austin also operates an electric utility (Austin Energy), a water/wastewater utility (Austin Water Utility), the Palmer Events Center, the Neal Kocurek Memorial Austin Convention Center, and the Austin-Bergstrom International Airport.

### Potable Water, Wastewater, Solid Waste, and Drainage

In 2008, Austin Water Utility managed water and wastewater service connections, serving an overall population of approximately 895,000 people. Austin Water's total operating costs for fiscal year 2009 were approximately \$400 million. In addition, Austin Water Utility manages the City's wildlands conservation, water conservation, and water reclamation programs, and operates the Center for Environmental Research at Hornsby Bend.

Austin Resource Recovery is responsible for citywide litter abatement and collection of discarded materials. In addition to providing weekly garbage and yard trimmings collection services, the City offers bi-weekly curbside recycling to its customers. Austin Resource Recovery's annual operating costs are approximately \$66 million. Its primary source of revenue is residential solid waste collection fees.

**KEY ISSUES AND TRENDS:**

- Continued suburban sprawl can strain the City's public safety budget, as more development on the city's fringes will require additional police and fire stations to ensure adequate response times.
- Low-density, suburban development will require costly water and sewer infrastructure extensions.
- Despite having an above-average amount of parkland citywide, many neighborhoods are not within walking distance of a park. The absence of these smaller parks means that many areas of the city are not adequately served by the park system.
- Austin is a regional leader in conservation strategies, but must be proactive in planning for supplying water and other municipal services to its rapidly-growing population.
- More residents and businesses need to recycle to reduce the amount of solid waste deposited in regional landfills.
- The City of Austin's Municipal Climate Action Program requires all departments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from operations and facilities.

Austin Resource Recovery serves approximately 164,000 residential customers, 235,000 anti-litter customers, and 2,600 commercial customers, who discard approximately 25 percent of all materials collected in Austin each year.

The Watershed Protection Department is responsible for the operation and maintenance of the municipal storm water conveyance systems for the City. This includes the area's natural water resources, which are a source of community pride, drinking water, recreational opportunities, attractive views, and support for the region's green infrastructure. Watershed Protection maintains more than 900 miles of storm drainpipe, ranging in size from as small as six inches in diameter to the Little Shoal Creek Tunnel, which is a 10-foot concrete arch. In addition to minor channels and ditches, the system includes over 29,000 storm drain inlets, 3,200 manholes, 4,500 outfalls, 9,000 culverts, and 4,000 ditches. This system is intended to efficiently convey stormwater flows to the primary drainage system in Austin—its creeks. When the secondary drainage system is inadequate, localized flooding usually occurs.

**Energy**

Austin Energy serves 388,000 customers (with a population of more than 900,000), including several communities outside of Austin's city limits. In 2008, it had approximately 2,760 megawatts of generation capacity, including generation from coal, nuclear, natural gas, wind, solar, and landfill methane. From 1982 to 2003, Austin Energy's conservation, efficiency, and load-shifting programs reduced peak demand by 600 MW. Since 2004, the utility has been working on a goal to reduce peak demand by an additional 700 MW by 2020.

Austin Energy maintains more than 5,000 miles of overhead primary and secondary power lines, 4,000 miles of underground primary and secondary lines, and 48 substations.

**Public Safety**

Austin's public safety departments operate as three separate services: police, fire, and emergency medical services (jointly funded by the City of Austin and Travis County). The three services maintain more than 70 stations throughout Austin and Travis County and employ more than 3,700 people.

**Public Buildings and Facilities**

Municipal functions are distributed across the city, but the majority of the City's administrative functions operate from either City Hall or One Texas Center in downtown Austin. Austin's building inventory includes approximately 250 facilities, both owned and leased, such as offices, libraries, recreation centers, fire stations, and service/fleet operating facilities.

The Austin Public Library System has 20 branch libraries, the John Henry Faulk Central Library, and the Austin History Center. Austin Public Library received more than 3.2 million visits in 2007-08. Austin libraries provide many residents their primary access to the internet; in 2007-08, 900,000 computer users logged in at a library. In 2006, voters approved bonds for an approximately 200,000 square foot, state-of-the art central library that is scheduled to open in 2015.

LUT	HN	E	CE	CFS	S	C
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## Recreation and Open Space

The city has more than 35,000 acres of parks and preserves, consisting of metropolitan parks, district parks, neighborhood parks, school parks, pocket parks, greenways, waterways, golf courses, senior activity centers, tennis courts, special parks, and nature preserves. The Austin Parks and Recreation Department is responsible for the management of parks, recreational centers, museums, arts and performance spaces, a botanical garden, a nature center, and an urban forestry program. The Public Works and Parks and Recreation Departments work together to create an interconnected bicycling, pedestrian, and trails network. Parks, trails, and preserves contribute to the city's green infrastructure network. This network includes the natural resource areas described in the Conservation and Environment building block, such as wetlands, woodlands, waterways, conservation lands, forests, farms and ranches, and outdoor recreational areas and trails.

## KEY CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

- Continuing to provide high-quality public services to a city that is expanding through suburban development, annexation, and higher-density redevelopment in the urban core.
- Improving the city's resiliency to address the effects of climate change, including hotter, drier seasons and droughts.
- Expanding our commitment to reducing water use through conservation, reclamation, and drought-management programs, while identifying and addressing the effects of doing so on revenue and operating expenses.
- Reducing the volume of stormwater runoff and improving the quality of groundwater infiltration.
- Reducing energy consumption to meet the energy efficiency goals set by Austin Energy and the greenhouse gas reduction goals of the Austin Climate Protection Plan.
- Increasing recycling rates from multi-family, commercial, institutional, industrial, and manufacturing waste generators.
- Developing more local recycling and composting facilities with capacity to handle large volumes of discarded materials.
- Adapting to and taking advantage of new technologies in police, fire, and public library services.
- Ensuring public safety facilities have the space and additional land to house staff and equipment in locations that serve existing and new development and minimize response times.
- Providing services to a city with a changing demographic profile. The increase in older and younger Austinites will require additional services oriented to these age groups. The changing ethnic and racial composition of the city will also shift demand for certain services, including an increased need for multilingual communications.

## FROM THE VISION STATEMENT - AUSTIN IS LIVABLE:

One of Austin's foundations is its safe, well-maintained, stable, and attractive neighborhoods and places whose character and history are preserved. Economically mixed and diverse neighborhoods across all parts of the city have a range of affordable housing options. All residents have a variety of urban, suburban, and semi-rural lifestyle choices with access to quality schools, libraries, parks and recreation, health and human services, and other outstanding public facilities and services.

In 2039, “Austin has expanded public services and is providing libraries, parks, public education, and health services to all its residents. There is plenty of affordable housing...”

Community Forum Series #1  
Participant responding to the question “How has the city improved by 2039?”

“All government levels (city, regional, state) and organizations coordinate in an efficient manner.”

Community Forum Series #1  
Participant

- Providing sufficient funding for maintaining parks and other recreation facilities as the acreage and number of facilities continue to increase.
- Strengthening partnerships between the City of Austin and private organizations, volunteers, and community groups to efficiently provide open space and recreation.
- Preserving environmentally sensitive areas as open space and providing parks within walking distance of all city residents.
- Maintaining existing public infrastructure and facilities, such as streets, public buildings, parks, and water, wastewater, and drainage systems, while planning for new investments to accommodate future growth and the community’s desire for new programs and infrastructure.
- Collaborating with Travis, Williamson, and Hays Counties, as well as other partners, to address the challenges identified above.

### WASTEWATER, POTABLE WATER, AND DRAINAGE POLICIES

**CFS P1.** Deliver potable water to Austin’s residents as the population grows and maintain an efficient and sustainable water and drainage system in support of the Growth Concept Map. (See also LUT P1)

**CFS P2.** Maintain water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure regularly throughout its useful life and replace aged infrastructure as conditions warrant. Continue to ensure safe and reliable service. (See also HN P12, E P15)

**CFS P3.** Continue to develop and evaluate decentralized wastewater processing site options, including package plants and satellite facilities, to complement centralized facilities.

**CFS P4.** Expand efforts to diversify water sources, including through reuse, conservation, and efficiency measures for long-term and reliability planning.

**CFS P5.** Plan for and adapt to increased drought, severe weather, and other potential impacts of climate change on the water supply. (See also CE P9)

**CFS P6.** Protect the public water supply and the health and safety of users. (See also CE P6, CE P7 )

**CFS P7.** Reduce the threats flooding poses to public safety and private property.

**CFS P8.** Reduce pollution in all creeks from stormwater runoff, overflow, and other non-point sources.<sup>5</sup> (See also CE P6, CE P7)

**CFS P9.** Reduce per capita potable water use through conservation, water reclamation, and other water resource stewardship programs. (See also CE P9, CE P12)

<sup>5</sup> Pollutants from a source that is difficult to pinpoint, such as chemicals from lawns and fields, trash, oil, and animal and human wastes.

**CFS P10.** Protect and improve the health of Austin's streams, lakes, and aquifers for sustainable uses and the support of aquatic life. (See also CE P6, CE P7)

**CFS P11.** Protect the health of creeks and prevent public and private property damage by minimizing erosion. (See also CE P6)

**CFS P12.** Maintain or enhance the existing rate of recharge in the Edward's Aquifer. (See also LUT P21)

**CFS P13.** Meet or exceed all local, state, and federal permit and regulatory requirements for such processes and programs as Designated Use Support status and the National Flood Insurance Program. (See also CE P6, CE P7, CFS P14)

**CFS P14.** Integrate erosion, flood, and water quality control measures into all City of Austin capital improvement projects. (See also CE P6, CE P7)

## SOLID WASTE POLICIES

**CFS P15.** Create a regional solid waste management plan that addresses the waste management implications of continued growth in Central Texas. (See also CE P15)

**CFS P16.** Expand waste diversion rates and services: (See also CE P15)

- o Require recycling at apartment complexes, retail establishments, restaurants, and manufacturers.
- o Increase the types of materials that can be added to curbside collection.
- o Develop more effective recycling practices for construction and demolition debris.
- o Increase composting at homes and businesses.
- o Improve recycling of materials and food scraps in public spaces, in trash receptacles on city streets, and at public events.



Austin Resource Recovery collects hazardous waste and diverts it from landfills.

### BEST PRACTICE: RECYCLING RATES AND SERVICES | SAN JOSE, CA

San Jose has a reputation for innovation and leadership in recycling. In 2009, the Solid Waste Association of North America awarded the City its Recycling System Excellence Award for its efforts in diverting nearly 80 percent of apartment waste from landfills through a processing system that removes recyclables and composts organic materials.

San Jose is also working to reduce the amount of construction waste headed to landfills—which can account for 30 percent of total materials. Under the Construction and Demolition Diversion Deposit program, San Jose collects a mandatory deposit, based on square footage and project type, through building permitting. The deposit is fully refundable with proof that construction and demolition materials are being diverted from landfills. Materials can be taken to a certified facility for recycling, re-use, or donation.

Reference: [www.recycletogether.com](http://www.recycletogether.com), <http://www.sjrecycles.org/construction-demolition/cddd.asp>.



Irrigating with reclaimed water reduces waste and saves water for drinking.

**CFS P17.** Divert hazardous waste from landfills and increase participation in recycling hazardous materials by developing programs and practices such as on-call door-to-door hazardous waste collection program.

(See also CE P15)

**CFS P18.** Divert bulk items, such as furniture and other household items, from landfills and consider ways to recycle or reuse these materials. (See also CE P15)

**CFS P19.** Improve awareness and participation in the City's recycling programs through traditional and emerging methods such as large-scale media, social marketing campaigns, and presence at public events.

**CFS P20.** Continue to work with the Texas Product Stewardship Council and others to advocate for statewide "extended producer responsibility" initiatives that require manufacturers and retailers to stop using "hard to recycle" and/or toxic products.

(See also CE P15)

## ENERGY POLICIES

**CFS P21.** Support the Growth Concept Map and provide affordable, reliable electricity to Austin's residents and businesses.

(See also LUT P1, E P15)

**CFS P22.** Reduce per capita energy use through conservation and improvements that make buildings more energy efficient.

(See also HN P8, HN P9, CE P9, CE P11)

**CFS P23.** Reduce peak energy demand and total electric generation capacity that Austin Energy needs to maintain by encouraging users to use electricity during off-peak hours.

(See also CE P9, CE P11)

**CFS P24.** Increase the share of renewable energy sources, such as wind, solar, and biomass, used by Austin Energy to generate electricity, including infrastructure for on-site sources throughout the city.

(See also HN P8, E P15, CE P9)

## PUBLIC SAFETY POLICIES

**CFS P25.** Reduce crime rates, thereby improving the perceived and actual safety in neighborhoods across Austin.

### BEST PRACTICE: FOSTERING SAFE COMMUNITIES CRIME PREVENTION THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN PRINCIPLES IN ACTION HOUSTON, TX

One of the goals of the GO Neighborhoods program of Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) Houston is to support healthy neighborhood development through livable and safe environments. GO Neighborhood safety team members instructed more than 40 neighborhood leaders about best practices and principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design. The principles are part of LISC's SafeGrowth training and certification program for community leaders.

The new trainees will analyze problem areas using a safety audit form and work with police, civic organizations, community residents, and property owners to begin applying these principles (such as lighting, access control, and "eyes on the street") in their neighborhoods. Reference: [www.go-neighborhoods.org](http://www.go-neighborhoods.org) [www.lisc.org](http://www.lisc.org).

**CFS P26.** Incorporate community outreach and involvement in public safety in order to build trust between the police force and Austin’s minority communities. (See also S P5)

**CFS P27.** Provide public safety services to newly annexed areas and areas with increased activity, such as new neighborhoods, redevelopment areas, transportation corridors, and activity centers.

**CFS P28.** Provide preventive safety education (fire, police, and emergency services) to Austin residents, with particular attention paid those individuals who speak little or no English.

**CFS P29.** Increase the use of joint or shared facilities between public safety and other city service providers, when possible, to provide residents with efficient services, reduce costs, and maintain public safety infrastructure. (See also S P28)

**CFS P30.** Improve collaboration between public safety providers and city planners to incorporate best development practices to reduce crime by such means as improved lighting, density, better designed neighborhood ingresses and egresses, and putting more “eyes on the street.” (See also LUT P30)

**CFS P31.** Collaborate and coordinate with other public safety agencies at the county, state, and federal levels to share resources and address the increasingly regional nature of crime.

**CFS P32.** Maintain quality standards in recruiting and training new public safety officers and strive for a public safety workforce that reflects Austin’s changing demographics.

**CFS P33.** Continue to improve education and training of public safety employees and build new skills in using technology to improve public safety.

#### BEST PRACTICE: JOINT USE FACILITIES

Many local governments have entered into agreements with their school districts for joint use of educational facilities. Under these agreements, a school property functions as an educational facility during the day and a community facility during non-school hours. Joint use is particularly valuable in the current economy, as many local governments have limited funds for new capital expenditures. Shared facilities reduce the costs of land acquisition, construction, maintenance, and operation, and may allow a community to better meet the infrastructure demands of new development. Joint use agreements typically allow the public to use a school’s playing fields and gymnasium, but many jurisdictions have agreements that enable sharing of multipurpose rooms and classrooms, cafeterias, computer/media centers, libraries, auditoriums, pools, and stadiums (this often happens when a new school is constructed with the intent of using it for educational and community purposes). Shared parking may be included to prevent community users from parking along nearby neighborhood streets or to add parking spaces to an urban neighborhood. Joint use transforms the school into a true community center that serves a wide range of users while minimizing costs.

Joint use agreements must be authorized by state law. Section 11.165 of the Texas Education Code permits school districts to allow after hours use of school facilities for libraries, tutoring, and recreational purposes.



The Twin Oaks Library in the Bouldin neighborhood, which opened in 2010, incorporates green building principles.

## PUBLIC BUILDING POLICIES

**CFS P34.** Improve access to neighborhood libraries to promote the establishment of complete communities throughout Austin.

(See also S P3)

**CFS P35.** Distribute public buildings where neighborhood services are located and other accessible locations throughout the city.

(See also S P14)

**CFS P36.** Improve multi-modal public transportation access to the City's public buildings and facilities, including the Austin-Bergstrom International Airport.

**CFS P37.** Integrate public buildings and facilities into active, walkable, mixed use neighborhoods and complete, healthy communities.

(See also LUT P5, S P3)

**CFS P38.** Reduce energy consumption and waste generation in all public buildings to meet the City's greenhouse gas reduction and Zero Waste goals.

(See also CE P9)

**CFS P39.** Develop public buildings and facilities that create healthy work environments and educate the public about energy-efficient, sustainable building, and greening best practices.

**CFS P40.** Serve Austin's diverse, growing population and provide family-friendly amenities throughout the city by developing new parks and maintaining and upgrading existing parks.

(See also LUT P5, LUT P29, LUT P32, S P3)

## RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE POLICIES

**CFS P41.** Ensure and increase equitable access to and opportunities for arts, recreation, and leisure activities for all ages throughout the City. (See also LUT P29, LUT P32, HN P10, C P14)

**CFS P42.** Increase connectivity between neighborhoods and from neighborhoods to parks and greenways through the use of side-walks, bicycle lanes, multi-use paths, and trails.

(See also LUT P15, HN P10)

**CFS P43.** Maximize the role of parks and recreation in promoting healthy communities and lifestyles. (See also S P3)

**CFS P44.** Feature superior design in parks and recreational facilities and include opportunities for public art and sustainable design solutions.

(See also LUT P35, C P16, C P17)

**CFS P45.** Expand the amount of permanently protected natural and environmentally sensitive areas for use as open space and passive recreational areas.

(See also CE P1, CE P2, CE P5)

**CFS P46.** Foster the use of creeks and lakes for public recreation and enjoyment in a manner that maintains their natural character. (See also CE P8)

**CFS P47.** Extend existing trail and greenway projects to create an interconnected green infrastructure network that includes such elements as preserves and parks, trails, stream corridors, green streets, greenways, agricultural lands linking all parts of Austin and connecting Austin to nearby cities.

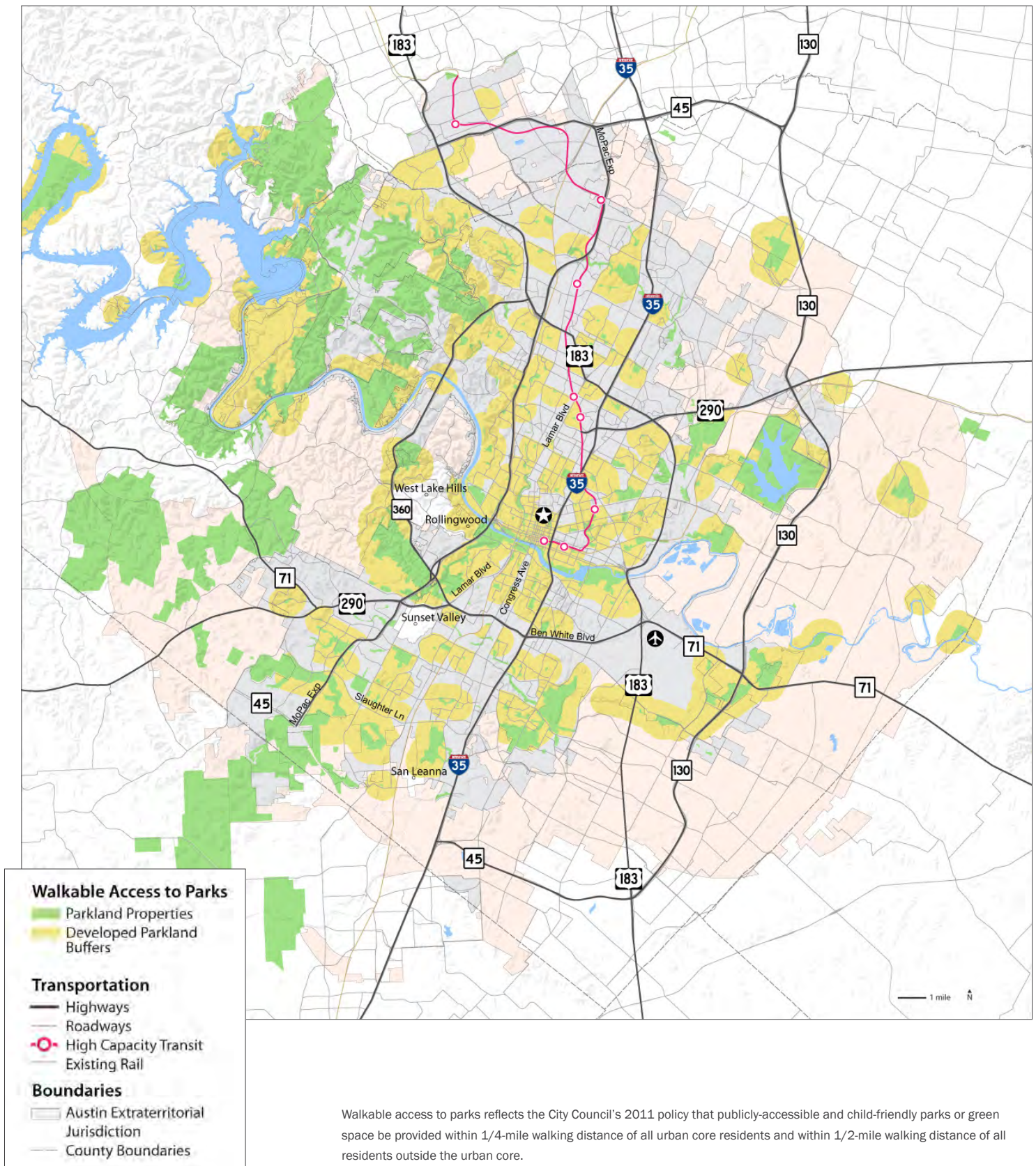
(See also LUT P23, LUT P34, CE P3)

**CFS P48.** Maintain existing partnerships and develop new relationships among City of Austin departments, regional governments, other governments, community organizations, and volunteers to support recreational services and achieve higher levels of service.

(See also CE P16)



Figure 4.11 Walkable Access to Parks





This is a rendering of the new Central Library located between the Seaholm and Green Water Treatment Plan redevelopment sites. The new state-of-the-art library is expected to open in 2015 and will be about 200,000 square feet, incorporate green infrastructure, and link to the Lance Armstrong Bikeway, the Trail at Lady Bird Lake, and Shoal Creek Trail.



## SOCIETY

Complete Community Matrix



**LIVABLE**



**NATURAL AND  
SUSTAINABLE**



**CREATIVE**



**EDUCATED**



**PROSPEROUS**



**MOBILE AND  
INTERCONNECTED**



**VALUES AND  
RESPECTS PEOPLE**

A community's overall health is affected by the quality of the built and natural environment, as well as the services available. The built environment refers to the human-made surroundings: the roads, neighborhoods, parks, and buildings that define the physical form of a city. The natural environment refers to resources such as air, water, soil, flora, and fauna. Built and natural environments that promote health and well-being place fewer demands on public health services. Promoting community-wide health and wellness, safety, disease prevention, and mitigation of potential environmental hazards and disasters are all components of a healthy community. Accessible quality educational options promote a sustainable community by preparing residents for a changing world and economy.

The ongoing national discussion about childhood and adult obesity and their associated illnesses — diabetes, high blood pressure, and heart disease — indicates the need to address healthy communities on all fronts. Addressing the design of cities and their neighborhoods, corridors, and centers is crucial in laying the groundwork for creating healthy communities.

As Austin becomes more diverse, so do its families. There are large and small ones; there are married and non-married couples who may or may not have children; some families may have only one parent and others may have extended families living under a single roof; some heads of families are gay or lesbian and may or may not have children; as well as a range of other family types. Regardless of their composition, families need access to services, healthy food, transportation choices, healthy housing, family- and children-friendly activities, and a safe environment. Healthy children and families are essential for a strong and resilient community.

**KEY ISSUES AND TRENDS:**

- Health care access in Austin is slightly better than the U.S. average, but below what would be considered optimal. The percentage of Travis County residents with health insurance is decreasing and lower income families are less likely to be covered.
- As of 2009, all Central Texas counties were classified as “medically underserved” by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- The Central Texas Sustainability Indicators Project found that nearly all clusters of middle school students who are obese live in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods in northern, eastern, and southern parts of the city.
- According to the Austin Independent School District, in the 2008-2009 school year, less than 65 percent of students had healthy body mass index — a ratio of a person’s height and weight often used as a health indicator.
- Long term trends showing significant increases in diabetes rates will place a strain on delivery of health services.
- Currently, Austinites 45 and older are making the largest gains in population. Services specific to an aging population will increase as this group ages.
- Access to healthy foods is limited in some neighborhoods. Proximity and cost can both be limiting factors for access, particularly in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods.
- As housing becomes more expensive in Austin, some families are seeking homes outside of the city and farther from jobs — resulting in increased transportation costs and travel times.

Austin is a highly educated city, including a large portion of the population with advanced degrees. However, there are populations and parts of the city that lag behind in education. To ensure that all Austinites can take part in the future envisioned by *Imagine Austin*, more educational opportunities are needed. Education goes beyond basic primary, secondary, and university education; it also includes quality day care and education from birth, continuing education throughout life, and job skills training.

**KEY CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE**

- Ensuring that health care providers continue to meet the needs of the changing population, including seniors and the disabled.
- Providing accessible preventive and basic health care and services for all residents, including the economically disadvantaged, uninsured, and underinsured.
- Becoming a leader in health care research and technology.
- Improving access to services for those struggling with drug and alcohol abuse.
- Providing reliable access to housing and quality childcare for low- and middle-income families.
- Increasing access to programs to enhance birth to age five development, quality pre-kindergarten options to make sure children are prepared to begin primary education and providing high-quality education and services to all residents of Austin.
- Ending homelessness with supportive housing, mental health services, counseling, and alcohol and drug treatment.
- Increasing accessibility and affordability of healthy lifestyle choices for low-income families and residents.
- Raising childhood fitness levels to help stem the tide of childhood health problems, such as obesity and asthma.
- Ensuring that neighborhood streets are both safe and widely perceived to be safe to encourage children to play outside and encourage more outdoor activities by residents.
- Protecting the population from hazardous substances and pollution.
- Preparing high school, vocational school, and college graduates to enter the workforce at a competitive level.
- Improving access to job resources and training to improve ability to find jobs paying a living wage.

- Using schools as community centers and places for lifelong learning, including activities such as parenting classes, early childhood learning, tutoring, adult education, libraries, and technology education.
- Reducing high school and college drop-out rates.
- Reducing the incidence of teen pregnancy through expanded education programs and assisting those teens who do get pregnant with better access to prenatal healthcare, programs to keep them in school, and job training.

## HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICE POLICIES

**S P1.** Provide access to primary, preventive health, trauma, specialty care, and urgent care.

**S P2.** Attract and retain high-quality health service providers (including doctors, dentists, specialists, medical technicians, and nurses) and promote the development and expansion of medical education opportunities.

(See also E P9)

**S P3.** Encourage more active lifestyles through new and redevelopment that supports walking and bicycling. Locate retail, services, and public facilities such as parks, health services, and libraries in or near neighborhoods to reduce traffic congestion and contribute to an improved sense of community. (See also LUT P3, LUT P5, LUT P32, LUT P36, HN P4, CFS P34, CFS P40, CFS P43)

**S P4.** Reduce homelessness through long-term supportive housing, mental health services, counseling, and alcohol and drug treatment.

(See also HN P3)

**S P5.** Develop close relationships between public safety personnel and neighborhoods to promote cooperation and safety.

(See also CFS P26)

**S P6.** Promote the availability of and educate the community about healthy food choices, including “slow food” (local food traditions, small-scale food processing, and organic agriculture) and nutritional education programs. (See also E P18, CE P13)



The CommUnity Care clinic in north Austin provides comprehensive public healthcare services, including to people without insurance.

### BEST PRACTICE: CENTRAL TEXAS SUSTAINABLE FOOD CENTER

Formed in 1975, the Sustainable Food Center supports improved access to locally grown food, community health, and sustainable farming practices. The center connects farmers with local households through farmers markets, hospitals, universities, schools, and worksites to improve access to nutritious, affordable food and support agricultural viability. The center also plays a major role in education and community health through The Happy Kitchen program and its relationships with regional school districts, school health advisory councils, PTA organizations, and foundations. *Reference: [www.sustainablefoodcenter.org](http://www.sustainablefoodcenter.org).*



The Alamo Community Garden in the Blackland neighborhood.

In 2039, Austin is “Community strength. Families, trust, safety, shared spaces highly valued, community centers, community gardens.”

Community Forum Series #1  
Participant responding to the question “How has the city improved by 2039?”

**S P7.** Provide broad access to fresh foods, local farmers markets, co-ops, grocery stores, community gardens, and healthy restaurants in neighborhoods. (See also E P18, CE P13)

**S P8.** Improve educational opportunities for marginalized populations and provide better services for at-risk segments of our community.

**S P9.** Develop and promote tobacco cessation programs and regulations to support tobacco-free environments.

**S P10.** Reduce the incidence of teenage pregnancy and address the associated social and health concerns.

### CHILDREN, FAMILIES, AND EDUCATION POLICIES

**S P11.** Develop public transportation options that link all areas of the city, are affordable to economically disadvantaged groups, and provide access to job opportunities and services. (See also LUT P7)

**S P12.** Increase the variety of housing options (such as the types of housing and number of bedrooms) to meet the needs of family and non-traditional households, including households with children.

(See also LUT P5, HN P1)

**S P13.** Provide opportunities for seniors and other persons to live in affordable housing that meets their specific needs and in neighborhoods that allow them to safely travel to and access their daily needs.

(See also HN P3, HN P5)

**S P14.** Locate emergency services within close proximity to all neighborhoods and continue to improve community outreach and relationships between police and neighbors.

(See also CFS P26, CFS P29)

**S P15.** Collaborate with educational partners to increase access to educational opportunities for higher education, technical education, and vocational training in Austin area public schools, colleges, universities, and other educational facilities. Match job training with current and expected employment needs for existing and emerging “target industries.”

(See also E P10, E P11, E P12, E P17)

**S P16.** Increase the availability of continuing education. (See also E P12, E P17)

#### BEST PRACTICE: TANDEM TEEN PRENATAL AND PARENTING PROGRAM | AUSTIN, TX

Begun in 1998, the Tandem Teen Prenatal and Parenting Program is an interagency collaboration, led by People’s Community Clinic. It provides medical, mental health, educational and vocational services, and social support to pregnant and parenting teens. The program aims to improve the health and well-being of teen mothers and their children and to reduce the incidence of additional pregnancies for these young women. The program addresses the medical, educational, and psychosocial needs of young parents during pregnancy and through the first three years of their baby’s life. By partnering with Any Baby Can, Austin Child Guidance Center, and LifeWorks, the program offers a comprehensive array of services to young parents including intensive case management, mental health services, medical and prenatal care, child development, family planning, and parenting education. Over 90 percent of participants have accessed ongoing healthcare for themselves and their children, including annual exams, well-child checks, sick care, and up-to-date immunizations. *Reference: <http://www.austinpcc.org/special-programs/tandem/>.*



The Green Classroom at Becker Elementary, an organic garden that provides students a hands-on opportunity to learn about ecology and healthy food.

**S P17.** Work with the school districts on planning for long-range student population growth from kindergarten through high school. Encourage school district support of the *Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan* in securing new educational facilities and maintaining existing facilities. (See also LUT P13, E P10)

**S P18.** Improve educational opportunities for marginalized populations. (See also E P12, E P17)

**S P19.** Coordinate with educational and business partners to increase the availability of quality early education, child care, after school, and preschool programs for all residents, especially low and middle income households and families with children with disabilities. (See also LUT P13, E P4)

**S P20.** Enact land use and other planning policies that enhance the quality of life for families with children and promote family-friendly neighborhoods and services.

**S P21.** Increase dense, compact family-friendly housing in the urban core by creating standards and guidelines that encourage private interests to create more family-friendly development. (See also LUT P5)

**S P22.** Improve access to quality child care services near homes and workplaces. (See also HN P4)

**S P23.** Partner with local school districts to transform school yards into multi-use recreational and exercise facilities, with such amenities as playgrounds, athletic courts and fields, walking/running tracks, and swimming pools. (See also LUT P13)

**S P24.** Partner with local school districts, non-profits, and civic groups to expand after school and summer programs for children of all ages and abilities. (See also CE P19)

“Increase community awareness to keep our neighborhoods, police, Neighborhood Associations intact; safe...educated city with opportunities for all citizens to improve their lives...”

Community Forum Series #1  
Participant

**S P25.** Increase sidewalks and bicycle lanes in neighborhoods to create safer routes to schools, parks, and transit stops.

(See also LUT P14, LUT P15)

**S P26.** Ensure that Austin children in every part of town have access to an excellent education.

**S P27.** Partner with Austin-area school districts to enhance policies and practices that support neighborhood-based schools.

**S P28.** Collaborate with school districts,

public, and private entities to create joint-use partnerships at existing and new public school campuses. (See also LUT P13, CFS P29)

**S P29.** Create public spaces that attract and engage children and serve as gathering places for children and families.

(See also LUT P5, LUT P29)

**S P30.** Ensure that our youngest children are healthy, happy, and ready for school success by ensuring they have access to education, health care, and other necessary resources and services.

**S P31.** Austin commits itself to becoming an age-friendly city that enables people of all ages to actively participate in community activities and treats everyone with respect, regardless of their age.



Maplewood Elementary School in the Cherrywood Neighborhood.

#### BEST PRACTICE: CAPITAL IDEA | AUSTIN, TX

Capital IDEA helps low income adults wanting a career but unable to pay for the necessary training. The program works with local employers to identify expanding job sectors that pay a living wage. Once the training and education level needed for these careers are identified, they are added to the Sponsored Career List. This list includes jobs in the healthcare, high-tech, and professional trade fields. Capital IDEA awards sponsorship for educational training up to an associate degree in several career fields.

Low-income adults in Central Texas meeting certain qualifications can apply to become a sponsored participant. If accepted into the program, Capital IDEA will identify the training steps needed for each person to achieve their career goals. Capital IDEA will pay the full cost of the participant's education through graduation. This includes the cost for tuition, academic fees, and books. Additionally, the program offers placement assistance, emergency assistance, and for participants with children, the program helps with childcare expenses. Reference: <http://www.capitalidea.org/>.



Sprouting Healthy Kids, Sustainable Food Center's farm-to-school and food-systems education program, features local foods in school cafeterias, plus educational activities like this "Meet the Farmer" event with Erin Flynn of Green Gate Farms. Pattypan squashes (*Cucurbita pepo*) are among the abundance of crops that thrive in Austin's urban farms and community gardens. Photograph courtesy of Sustainable Food Center.



The New Pornographers perform at Stubb's during SXSW.



## CREATIVITY

Complete Community Matrix



LIVABLE



NATURAL AND  
SUSTAINABLE



CREATIVE



EDUCATED



PROSPEROUS



MOBILE AND  
INTERCONNECTED



VALUES AND  
RESPECTS PEOPLE

Austin's creativity is expressed through the arts, music, dance, film, food, design, gaming, architecture, cultural traditions and history, and a variety of print and electronic media. A young, diverse city with a tradition of attracting creative individuals, Austin has a national reputation for its artistic and welcoming culture. It is routinely ranked as one of the "Best Of" cities in the country based on a high percentage of its workforce in creative jobs, a relatively low cost of living (especially when compared to the East and West coasts), and healthy employment and salary growth.

The Cultural Arts Division within the Economic Growth and Redevelopment Services Office, oversees the City's cultural arts programs and the development of arts and creative industries as a part of Austin's overall economic development strategy. Programs include Art in Public Places, community-based arts development, assistance for the music, film, and creative industries, and initiatives designed to support and enhance Austin's creative identity and vitality. The History, Arts, and Nature Division of the Parks and Recreation Department provides artistic, cultural, and historical opportunities for the public at its museums, theaters, and arts centers. It provides exhibits, classes, programs, and low-cost or free use of their facilities, which supports a lifelong learning in the arts and helps incubate local arts.

Arts, culture, and creativity are highly valued in Austin. Following a two-year planning effort, the City adopted the *CreateAustin Cultural Master Plan* in 2010. In addition to refining the City's roles and responsibilities for cultural support and identifying strategies for both the City and the community to implement, the planning process sparked partnerships between community leaders and the City. Austin must support and value the city's arts and creative sectors as vital contributors to the city's identity, economy, and quality of life.

## KEY ISSUES AND TRENDS

- Austin's arts and entertainment scene is a cornerstone of the city's identity.
- Arts and entertainment are also important elements of the city's economy and can be leveraged for additional economic growth.
- City and private funding for local arts facilities and programs is critical to the ongoing strength of the arts in Austin.
- Lower-income and minority communities may not have adequate opportunities to participate in Austin's arts programs and events.
- Access to affordable art studio and performance space needs to be maintained.
- Workforce development programs should include job training for technological, arts-related occupations.



Photo by Tony Spielberg.

## KEY CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

- Providing affordable, accessible, and functional studio, performance, rehearsal, and office spaces for small organizations and individual artists.
- Ensuring that affordable residential units and transportation options are available for artists as housing costs and land values in the urban core rise.
- Improving awareness and visibility of the City of Austin's many public art projects and its broad range of cultural resources, including museums and art centers.
- Providing ongoing funding for community arts programs.
- Maintaining a strong commitment to cultural and arts programs in schools and communities and ensuring that all residents have equal access to these programs.
- Increasing the role of arts and creativity in strengthening Austin's multicultural identity.
- Integrating arts and performance facilities and activities with downtown development in a way that is true to Austin's identity.
- Managing conflicts between live music and a growing urban population.

## FROM THE VISION STATEMENT - AUSTIN IS CREATIVE

Creativity is the engine of Austin's prosperity. Arts, culture, and creativity are essential keys to the city's unique and distinctive identity and are valued as vital contributors to our community's character, quality of life, and economy.

## CREATIVITY POLICIES

**C P1.** Continue to grow artists, micro-enterprises, and small arts organizations as businesses, and support iconic cultural institutions to sustain and grow Austin's economic and cultural vitality.

(See also E P1, E P2, E P5)

**C P2.** Increase and enhance coordination, resource sharing, and partnerships among artist and creative individuals, organizations, institutions, and businesses. (See also E P2)

**C P3.** Increase philanthropic, public, and resident support and participation in artistic and creative activities in Austin.

**C P4.** Continue to sustain and grow Austin's successful live music scene, festivals, theater, film and digital media, and other creative offerings.

**C P5.** Continue to explore and identify solutions to support live music venues, while addressing sound abatement issues.

**C P6.** Encourage new or existing art forms, new approaches to the creation or presentation of art, or new ways of engaging the public, including children, with art.

**C P7.** Grow Austin's regional and global cultural efforts in order to stimulate trade and bring new resources to the community.

(See also E P3, E P5, E P7)

**C P8.** Expand access to affordable and functional studio, exhibition, performance, and office space for arts organizations, artists, and creative industry businesses.

We will be “a city that retains the character of Austin of today, yesterday, years ago, and tomorrow — so that there is a thread/sense/pride of place now and for years to come. Blend of old and new, keep our neighborhoods, police, Neighborhood Associations intact...”

Community Forum Series #1  
Participant



Central to Austin's identity, live music can be found outside traditional performance venues, in such places as grocery stores and food trailers.

**C P9.** Encourage artists and other creative individuals by promoting the creation of live/work spaces and creative industry hubs, districts, and clusters as retail, community, or neighborhood anchors and activity generators to attract and support other economic and community enterprises. (See also LUT P3, HN P4, E P3)

**C P10.** Improve access to affordable living to include housing, healthcare, and effective transportation in order to develop and retain Austin’s creative organizations, industries, and individuals. (See also HN P3, HN P4)

**C P11.** Encourage creativity, imagination, and arts-based education in schools and neighborhoods throughout Austin to sustain Austin’s “culture of creativity” as a fundamental facet of Austin’s spirit and mindset.

**C P12.** Construct, sustain, and grow Austin’s multicultural and artistic heritage from African American, Hispanic, Asian, and other ethnic and culturally-specific groups as the city develops and grows. (See also LUT P38)

**C P13.** Create avenues for cultural variety and provide the opportunity for all groups to benefit from the different cultures present in Austin. (See also LUT P38)

**C P14.** Encourage grassroots, neighborhood-based organizations and activities that promote art, imagination, and creativity to enhance the role the arts play in community life. (See also LUT P5)

**C P15.** Maximize the recognition and participation of arts and creativity as part of Austin’s “Creative Economy.”

**C P16.** Increase the availability of significant public art to designate districts and/or their entrances and to assist visitors in navigating the area. (See also LUT P35, CFS P44)

**C P17.** Define Austin’s sense of place through high standards for architecture and urban design, public art, public spaces and parks, and arts education. (See also LUT P11, LUT P31, CFS P44)

**C P18.** Explore existing City policies, processes, and regulations regarding the arts to determine what changes can be made to coordinate these with other goals, such as historic preservation, affordable housing, and high-density development. (See also LUT P42)

**C P19.** Collaborate with area school districts, local businesses, and arts organizations in developing programs that encourage lifelong active engagement and participation in the cultural arts that are accessible to all people throughout Austin. (See also S P8)

#### BEST PRACTICE: ARTSPACE | MINNEAPOLIS, MN

ARTSPACE was established in 1979 to serve as an advocate for artists’ space needs and over the years has pioneered ways to build better communities through the arts by leveraging transformative social change. Today, ARTSPACE is now a national leader in the field of developing affordable spaces — more than 30 to date — that not only meet artists’ needs but help to create a synergy that increases collaborations, networking, sharing of equipment, resources, skills, and livelihood. Additionally, these developments anchor arts districts and expand public access to the arts. They also spur economic development in the neighborhoods and regions they reside in through attracting additional artists, arts businesses, organizations, and supporting non-arts businesses to the area. Reference: <http://www.artspace.org/>



Blue Lapis Light, *Angels In Our Midst*, dancers Laura Cannon and Nicole Whiteside, December 2007, at the Radisson Hotel as part of First Night Austin. Photography by Steve Hopson.



"Arachnophilla," a sculpture by Texas artist Dixie Friend Gay. The 23-foot tall sculpture straddles a walking and bike path in the Mueller development.

## **IMPLEMENTATION AND MEASURING SUCCESS**

**Priority Programs**

**Implementing the Comprehensive Plan**

**Documenting Progress: Plan Monitoring and Review**

**Action Matrix**





Citizens help plan areas of future growth in the chip exercise during the second Community Forum Series.

# 5

## CHAPTER

## IMPLEMENTATION AND MEASURING SUCCESS

“As it approaches its 200th anniversary, Austin is a beacon of sustainability, social equity and economic opportunity; where diversity and creativity are celebrated; where community needs and values are recognized; where leadership comes from its citizens and where the necessities of life are affordable and accessible to all.”

- Preamble to the *Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan*’s Vision Statement

This vision embodies what we aspire to as a community. However, realizing this future requires directed action. The plan contains the community’s vision and aspirations and is the lens through which the City of Austin will look when developing and interpreting policies and regulations, creating master and small area plans, implementing existing plans, and entering into partnerships. It will also guide spending and provide direction for capital improvement projects, budget priorities, and bond packages. Ultimately, the success of this plan will be measured by the extent to which we realize the vision and establish complete communities across Austin through effective implementation.

Transforming vision into reality through implementation will require incremental steps over time. Eight priority programs provide the structure and direction to implement the plan’s policies and Growth Concept Map (Chapter 4) and actions (Action Matrix starting on page 228). They reflect the six core principles for actions introduced in Chapter One:

### Core Principles for Action introduced in Chapter One

- Grow as a compact, connected city.
- Integrate nature into the city.
- Provide paths to prosperity to all.
- Develop as an affordable and healthy community.
- Sustainably manage water and other environmental resources.
- Think creatively and work together.

*Imagine Austin* and the City Charter set forth a comprehensive planning program, with annual monitoring and review to ensure Austin becomes the city its people want for the future. Each year, the Planning Commission and staff should develop a work plan that selects components of *Imagine Austin*’s priority programs and establishes how they will be implemented that year. This process should include reviewing the Action Matrix (starting on page 228) to identify potential actions for new or expanded priority programs.

## PRIORITY PROGRAMS

The priority programs organize *Imagine Austin*'s key policies and actions into related groups to make it easier to implement the plan. These programs build on existing policies and initiatives, as well as the community input provided during the process to create *Imagine Austin*. Each program cuts across and implements policies and actions from multiple building blocks. The structure they provide will allow the City of Austin to more efficiently coordinate its operations, investments, and the provision of core services.

The priority programs are:

1. Invest in a compact and connected Austin
2. Sustainably manage our water resources
3. Continue to grow Austin's economy by investing in our workforce, education systems, entrepreneurs, and local businesses
4. Use green infrastructure to protect environmentally sensitive areas and integrate nature into the city
5. Grow and invest in Austin's creative economy
6. Develop and maintain household affordability throughout Austin
7. Create a Healthy Austin Program
8. Revise Austin's development regulations and processes to promote a compact and connected city

The final program, to revise Austin's development regulations and processes, is an important step to promote each of the above priorities and to protect all that has been identified as valuable in the plan. The priority programs, policies, and actions in the plan all seek to achieve real functioning sustainability for Austin's future. As discussed in Chapters 1 and 4, a compact and connected city encapsulates household affordability, environmental protection, and complete communities, with easier, greener, healthier transportation options linking residents to jobs, arts and culture, parks, schools, health care, shopping, and other destinations. Each of these programs has important connections to the others that should be recognized throughout implementation.

The City of Austin is addressing many elements of the priority programs through current plans, initiatives, and partnerships. The priority programs will enable the City of Austin and its partners to pull together, break down silos, make connections, and leverage resources for more effective implementation. The following text provides an initial work program for each priority program, with short- and long-term steps (not necessarily indicating priority). Lead and partner departments and organizations who will be involved in each program are identified. Implementation should begin by confirming the lead partner responsible for overall coordination of the program, defining the roles of other involved partners inside and outside of city government, and determining how to engage the community in the process moving forward.

### RANKING THE PRIORITY PROGRAMS

As part of the public review of the draft *Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan*, the community was asked to rank the priority programs. Investing in our transportation system to create a compact and connected Austin received the most votes from the almost 2,500 responses.

## 1. Invest in a compact and connected Austin.

Transportation congestion consistently ranks as a major concern to Austinites. Addressing this concern requires the City of Austin and its partners to look for solutions beyond how we travel — automobiles, transit (bus and rail), walking, and bicycling — and begin dealing with underlying conditions that make it difficult for Austinites to move around the city. To do so, we need to coordinate the physical form of Austin — how it’s organized and how it is built with our transportation network.

Long-term strategies to reduce dependence on driving include improving rail and bus service, creating better bicycling routes, expanding our network of sidewalks and trails, and implementing travel demand management strategies.<sup>6</sup> Increased transportation options also allow young people, the elderly, and people with disabilities greater access to the city. In addition to designating an enhanced transit network, the Growth Concept Map (Fig. 4.5) identifies areas where roadway capacity can be enhanced. This new capacity takes the form of managed lanes to improve mobility for cars and transit along congested freeways and a complete arterial network to better serve areas on the city’s edge where future growth is expected.

*Imagine Austin* envisions establishing complete communities across the city and accommodating most future residents and jobs in centers and corridors identified on the Growth Concept Map. Compact centers and corridors allow daily necessities (such as work, shopping, dining, and school) to be located closer together, resulting in shorter, more convenient trips and less time spent on the road. Shorter distances between people’s homes, workplaces, and other daily destinations increase opportunities for walking and bicycling instead of driving. Walkable destinations can enable greater transit use. For those Austinites who choose to drive, it gives them the ability to park once and walk.

When viewed as a coordinated planning framework, the Growth Concept Map, complete communities concept, Capital Improvement Program, small area and transportation master plans, and incentives for business attraction, retention, and expansion can work together to achieve the goal of a compact, connected Austin. This coordination will ensure the City of Austin’s capital expenditures work toward the goal of compact and connected communities, particularly in the City’s extraterritorial jurisdiction, where infrastructure spending is one of the few tools available for shaping growth. As implementation of *Imagine Austin* continues, a coordinated approach will direct investments by the City of Austin, Travis County, and its partners to improve and expand transportation options to serve and connect centers and corridors, and to create human-scaled and inviting places.

### WORK PROGRAM

#### SHORT TERM (1-3 YEARS)

1. Continue to implement the *Austin Strategic Mobility Plan, Bicycle Master Plan, and Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization’s 2035 Regional Transportation Plan* in support of the Growth Concept Map.

#### LEAD

City of Austin Transportation Department; Economic Growth and Redevelopment Services Office; Capitol Planning Office

#### PARTNERS

Capital Metro; CAMPO; State and Federal agencies; City of Austin Planning and Development Review Department; Chambers of Commerce; Advocates for people with disabilities, transit users, bicyclists, and affordable housing

#### RELATED VISION COMPONENTS

Mobile and Interconnected

Livable

Prosperous

#### RELATED POLICIES

[LUT](#) P1-P5, P7, P9-P12, P14-P20, P29, P32, P33, P36, P45; [HN](#) P1, P3, P4, P7, P10, P12, P13; [E](#) P14, P15, P19; [CE](#) P3, P10; [CFS](#) P34, P36, P42; [S](#) P3, P11, P25.

#### RELATED ACTIONS

[LUT](#) A1, A5, A13, A14, A16-A18, A21-A25, A27, A31, A47; [HN](#) A5; [E](#) A5, A22; [CFS](#) A25, A34; [C](#) A14.

<sup>6</sup> The application of strategies and policies to reduce travel demand (particularly single-occupancy vehicles) or to redistribute this demand in space or time, thus reducing traffic congestion.

GOALS
<b>Increase non-vehicular trips.</b>
METRICS
- Transit ridership numbers
- Number of transit stops
- Percentage of trips by biking and walking
- Annual trips per capita
GOALS
<b>Improve access to transit.</b>
METRICS
- Population density within ½ mile of transit stops
- Employment density within ½ mile of transit stops and high capacity transit stops

2. Develop criteria and guidelines for coordinating business recruitment, expansion, and retention to support activity centers and corridors, transit, and urban trails plans in line with *Imagine Austin* and the Growth Concept Map.
3. Adopt a complete street policy and guidelines and include street standards in the City's new Land Development Code.
4. Continue working on demonstration corridors (Lamar Boulevard, Burnet Road, Riverside Drive, Airport Boulevard, and East MLK Boulevard/FM 969) to plan and build complete street improvements. These include separated bike lanes, wider sidewalks, and improved transit infrastructure with more user friendly bus shelters. Consider partnering with local businesses and artists to add amenities to demonstration corridors.
5. Expand the City's development and redevelopment services to support major projects across the city in support of *Imagine Austin* and the Growth Concept Map.

#### **ONGOING AND LONG TERM (3+ YEARS)**

6. Invest in new and reinvest in existing infrastructure to support a compact and connected city through a planning-driven capital improvements program. Track capital improvements geographically to ensure their alignment with the goals of *Imagine Austin*.
7. Use the *Austin Strategic Mobility Plan's* website to clearly communicate with and update the public about next steps, progress, ongoing efforts, timelines, and long-range plans to improve transit, walking, bicycling, and driving throughout the region.
8. Partner with local chambers of commerce, the business community, and regional, state, and federal entities to recruit and retain businesses to activity centers and corridors.
9. Continue to raise Austin's international profile and expand nearby job centers by increasing trade and securing direct international service at Austin-Bergstrom International Airport.
10. Build infrastructure and develop partnerships necessary to create jobs and economic vitality for the efficient and safe transport of goods through, to, and from Austin.
11. Work with federal, state, and local public and private agencies, organizations, and businesses to identify potential funding sources for partnerships to implement transportation improvements.
12. Coordinate with Travis County and local school districts to manage infrastructure investments.

**RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PRIORITY PROGRAMS:**

- Change Austin’s development regulations and processes to promote a compact and connected city. The *Strategic Mobility Plan and Complete Street* policy / guidelines will inform the revision to Austin’s Land Development Code. The revised code will include incentives for compact and transit oriented development and complete streets.
- Use green infrastructure to protect environmentally sensitive areas and integrate nature into the city. Green infrastructure includes attractive amenities for Austinites of all ages that improve health and quality of life. Complete street standards will include “green street” design and street tree requirements that add to the City’s green infrastructure.
- Create a Healthy Austin Program. Investing in an accessible transit, pedestrian, and bicycling network will provide Austin residents with alternatives to driving. Through improved land use, transportation, and urban design, Austin’s places can contribute to healthy lifestyles by encouraging walkable communities, parks, community gardens, open space, and recreation and by increasing access to local and nourishing food and reducing air pollution.
- Continue to grow Austin’s economy by investing in our workforce, education systems, entrepreneurs and local businesses. Coordinating the City’s investments in workforce training with its business attraction, expansion, and retention policies improves Austin’s prosperity and quality of life.

**RELATED CITY INITIATIVES:**

- Project Connect
- Austin Strategic Mobility Plan
- CAMPO 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan (complete)
- Urban Rail Study / EIS
- Sidewalk Master Plan
- Bicycle Master Plan
- MoPac Improvement Project (Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority)
- My35 Project (Texas Department of Transportation)
- East Seventh Street reconstruction project
- Healthy Austin Code
- Families and Children Task Force Report
- Urban Parks Workgroup Report
- Digital Inclusion Strategic Plan



## 2. Sustainably manage our water resources.

A changing climate, weather patterns, increasing demands on water in the aquifer, and regional water management complexities pose challenges requiring increased planning and coordination. Sustainably and resiliently adapting to changes will require the region to re-examine how we think about water and how we approach the long-term management of our water resources—the Colorado River, our aquifers, rainfall, conservation, and water re-use efforts, as well as exploring other potential sources of supply. A central focus of these efforts is to reduce water use by businesses and households (gallons per capita per day) while balancing available resources, evolving technologies, growth trends, environmental impact, and cost to Austin residents and ratepayers. In addition to preparing for these general trends and carrying out current drought contingency plans, the city and region should strengthen planning for droughts worse than the current Drought of Record (which occurred in the 1950s).

Water resources are key to Austin’s quality of life and viability as a city. Protecting our streams and floodplains helps maintain Austin’s natural beauty while promoting public health and safety, improving water quality, and preserving habitat for native species, including threatened and endangered species.

Responding to this challenge requires extensive involvement in regional efforts and close coordination across all aspects of Austin’s water resources. Bringing together existing efforts allows us to move forward with integrated strategies that address the range of water resource issues such as supply, quality, conservation, public health, and recreation.

### WORK PROGRAM

#### SHORT TERM (1-3 YEARS)

1. Update Austin Water Utility’s integrated water management plan, including water conservation goals, drought planning, and climate mitigation and adaptation strategies.
2. Enact a new watershed protection ordinance to streamline and expand protection of headwaters, and to promote low-impact stormwater management strategies, and reduce capital expenditures required to mitigate water quality problems, erosion, and flooding.
3. Coordinate efforts with Austin Energy and other local energy utilities to assess risks and propose risk mitigation strategies related to water demands for power generation.
4. Review and analyze auxiliary water regulations governing reclaimed water, graywater use, and rainwater harvesting to ensure that they encourage the use of these sources without compromising public health.

#### ONGOING AND LONG TERM (3+ YEARS)

5. Continue to use Austin’s rate structure to reduce water use while maintaining affordability for low water use households, funding further conservation and education efforts, and preserving Austin Water Utility’s financial stability.

LEAD
City of Austin Watershed Protection Department; Austin Water Utility
PARTNERS
City of Austin Transportation Department; Austin Parks and Recreation Department; Planning and Development Review Department
RELATED VISION COMPONENTS
Livable
Natural and Sustainable
RELATED POLICIES
LUT P21-P24, P34; E P5, P15; CE P2-P8, P10-P12, P14, P16; CFS P1-P6, P8-P14, P39, P43-P47.
RELATED ACTIONS
LUT A7, A10, A19, A37; HN A15, A23; CE A1-A9, A15-A18, A23, A24; CFS A8, A9, A11, A28, A29, A34-A44.

GOALS
<b>Conserve water resources.</b>
METRICS
- Average daily water usage
- Average daily water usage (residential)
GOALS
<b>Improve watershed health.</b>
METRICS
- Creek health (percent of assessed watersheds in excellent, very good, or good health)
- Impervious surface (total and per capita)
- Tree canopy (map and percentage)

6. Work collaboratively on water supply management and planning with the Lower Colorado River Authority to protect the City's water supply access and investments and ensure equitable and legal management of the Colorado River.

7. Maintain a non-degradation policy for the Barton Springs Zone.

8. Update the current Watershed Master Plan, expand the program to include other watersheds, and implement integrated strategies to protect and enhance water quality and supply, reduce flood risk, and prevent erosion.

9. Participate in state and regional water resources planning, including regional efforts to improve water quality and quantity of the Edwards Aquifer.

10. Implement Austin Water Utility's energy efficiency and demand reduction efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and meet the City's climate protection goals.

11. Increase coordination between Watershed Protection, Austin Water Utility, Office of Sustainability, Planning and Development Review, and other City departments.

#### RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PRIORITY PROGRAMS:

- Use green infrastructure to protect environmentally sensitive areas and integrate nature into the city. Innovative stormwater techniques, a healthy urban forest, additional water quality lands, and improved site design are key elements in the wise use of Austin's water resources, maintaining the region's hydrology, and adapting to Austin's future climate.
- Revise Austin's development regulations and processes to promote a compact and connected city. Updating the Land Development Code should improve the city's site and landscape design requirements.
- Invest in a compact and connected Austin. Maintain and upgrade existing infrastructure, including improvements to reduce water leaks.

#### RELATED CITY INITIATIVES:

Austin Climate Protection Plan

Austin Water 140 GPCD Conservation Plan

Peak Demand Plan

Austin Water Utility Master Plan

Watershed Protection Master Plan

Austin's State of the Environment Report

### 3. Continue to grow Austin’s economy by investing in our workforce, education systems, entrepreneurs, and local businesses.

To ensure Austin’s continued economic health we must develop a widely skilled workforce, recruit new businesses, retain and grow existing businesses, and tap into our entrepreneurial spirit. Although Austin attracts talented people from across the globe, there is a growing need to develop a homegrown workforce prepared to compete in the 21<sup>st</sup> century economy. Educational opportunities must be provided to meet the workforce needs of current and emerging industries.

Expanding the number of resident workers who have the skills required by growing industries is critical to sustain Austin’s economy. Business development and recruitment efforts should target those business sectors that can build upon the skills of Austin’s existing workforce. A deep, local talent pool provides a ready workforce for our existing businesses and can entice new businesses to locate in Austin. Growing local and recruiting outside businesses and industries that provide job opportunities for Austinites of all skill and educational levels is essential to continued economic health. A diverse, talented, and well-educated workforce can also serve as a fertile environment for entrepreneurs to emerge and grow new, locally-based businesses.

#### WORK PROGRAM

##### SHORT TERM (1-3 YEARS)

1. Identify a lead department within the City of Austin to coordinate its role in workforce development and education.
2. Work with businesses, non-profits, education partners, such as local colleges, universities, and technical schools, and the Texas Workforce Commission to identify gaps between Austin’s targeted industries and growing economic sectors and school, college, and university curriculum.
3. Partner with high schools, resource libraries, non-profits, technical schools, community colleges, and universities to expand curriculum related to specific job and special skills training and develop training resources related to the needs of local businesses and Austin’s targeted industries.
4. Partner with school districts and non-profit organizations to increase creative education programs for students as part of regular curriculum and through after-school activities.
5. Support efforts to fund and develop a top-tier medical school and residency programs in Austin.
6. Improve awareness of the benefits of early education and expand access to early childhood education programs and parenting resources.

##### ONGOING AND LONG TERM (3+ YEARS)

7. Actively recruit and retain businesses that create well-paying job opportunities for lower skilled and blue collar jobs or that provide a path upwards from entry-level jobs.

#### LEAD

City of Austin/AISD Board of Trustees/Travis County Commissioners Court Joint Committee; City of Austin Economic Growth and Redevelopment Services Office; City of Austin/Travis County Health and Human Services Department

#### PARTNERS

City of Austin Planning and Development Review Department; Workforce Solutions Capital Area; school districts, colleges, and universities; Chambers of Commerce

#### RELATED VISION COMPONENTS

Prosperous

Educated

Livable

Values and Respects its People

#### RELATED POLICIES

E P1-18, P19; S P8, P11, P15-P19, P26, P27; C P1, P11.

#### RELATED ACTIONS

HN A10; E A1-20, A22; CFS A27; S A13, A32-A41, A44-A49; C A16, A18-A19.

**GOALS**

**Increase job opportunities  
for Austin residents.**

**METRICS**

- Employment rate and average wages by age, geography, and race/ethnicity
- Total number and percentage of Austin skilled workforce compared with the region
- Working wage

**GOALS**

**Increase small businesses and  
entrepreneurship.**

**METRICS**

- Small business start-ups
- Percentage of high school students that are college ready
- Percentage of high school students graduating
- Percentage of high school students entering into secondary education (college or technical schooling)
- Percentage of university students retained in Austin after graduation

8. Encourage entrepreneurship and local businesses by creating programs and policies that enable local businesses to thrive.

9. Work with local business incubators in an effort to create a fertile environment for business start-ups and generate additional local venture capital investment.

**RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PRIORITY PROGRAMS:**

- Grow and Invest in Austin's creative economy. Arts and cultural education is a major focus of investing in Austin's workforce and education system. Encouraging innovation and providing support for local, small businesses and start-ups is key to growing Austin's creative economy.
- Develop and maintain household affordability. Affordable housing is necessary to grow Austin's economy and provide its workforce with places to live that are safe, convenient, and located close to job centers, good schools, retail, and services.
- Revise Austin's development regulations and processes to promote a compact and connected city. Create better rules for flex space and adaptive re-use to support small businesses, urban farms, and start-ups.
- Create a Healthy Austin Program. Develop a strong local food system in which food production, processing, distribution, and consumption are integrated to enhance the environmental, economic, social, and nutritional health of Austin and central Texas.
- Invest in a compact and connected Austin. Businesses should be encouraged to locate in accessible locations and complete communities.

**RELATED CITY INITIATIVES:**

- Small Business Development Programs
- Elevate Austin
- Opportunity Austin
- City of Austin Library Master and Facilities Plans
- Digital Inclusion Strategic Plan

#### 4. Use green infrastructure to protect environmentally sensitive areas and integrate nature into the city.

A green infrastructure program will create an interconnected system of parks, waterways, open space, trails, green streets, tree canopy, agriculture, and stormwater management features that mimic natural hydrology. It will also allow the City of Austin to expand upon existing efforts to protect environmentally sensitive areas such as waterways and riparian zones, springs, aquifer recharge features, canyonlands, and prairies. These diverse elements of Austin's green infrastructure serve multiple purposes and provide numerous benefits. The most visible of these benefits — the one most Austinites will experience firsthand — relates to how we experience the outdoors. These efforts will maintain our pleasant outdoor setting and provide safe access to green space and recreation for all Austinites, particularly in urban activity centers and corridors. The interconnected green spaces can provide recreational opportunities and transportation connections in the form of hiking and biking trails. The benefits to the environment are numerous and include enhanced stream health and improved water quality, reduced flood risk, and preserved and enhanced ecosystems and habitats. An integrated green infrastructure system can also reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions by providing alternatives to automobiles, reducing water use, and shading buildings.

A primary goal of the program is to manage Austin's urban and natural ecosystems in a coordinated, sustainable manner. The City currently plans for many of these elements independently; however, gaps remain.

#### WORK PROGRAM

##### SHORT TERM (1-3 YEARS)

1. Create an integrated green infrastructure plan and ongoing green infrastructure program.

The plan should:

- a. Define Austin's green infrastructure, its elements, and how those elements interact to benefit the city.
- b. Perform an initial inventory and evaluation of existing green infrastructure resources, such as conserved land, the urban forest, habitat, trails and bike paths, greenbelts, community gardens, urban farms, parks and recreation areas, and green streets. Identify current plans, such as the Travis and Hays County Greenprint plans, networks, and identify gaps.
- c. Develop green infrastructure targets (such as percentage of tree cover, connectivity, or current or anticipated residents within walking distance of parks, see Figure 4.11) and priorities for new areas for conservation, parks and open space, green streets, and urban trails.
- d. Include a series of interactive maps illustrating the components of the green infrastructure network, along with priority conservation and restoration areas.

#### LEAD

Sustainability Leadership Team

#### PARTNERS

Office of Sustainability; Austin Energy; Austin Water Utility; Austin Resource Recovery; Watershed Protection Department; Public Works; Economic Growth and Redevelopment Services; Austin Transportation Department; Parks and Recreation Department; Travis, Hays and Williamson Counties

#### RELATED VISION COMPONENTS

Livable

Mobile and Interconnected

Natural and Sustainable

#### RELATED POLICIES

LUT P21-P25, P34; HN P13; E P5; CE P1-P8, P11, P12, P14, P16; CFS P8, P10, P11, P14, P40, P42-P48; S P3.

#### RELATED ACTIONS

LUT A7, A19, A20, A32, A33, A36, A37, A39-A41; HN A15, A21, A23; CE A1-A6, A8-A11, A15-A24; CFS A1-A12, A23, A24, A34-A36, A39, A43.

GOALS
<b>Increase protection of environmentally sensitive land.</b>
METRICS
- Amount of permanently preserved land for protection of water quality, threatened or endangered species habitat, or other environmental resources
- Inventory of land, buildings, and other assets for current and potential food production sites (size, type, location)
GOALS
<b>Improve tree cover in every neighborhood.</b>
METRICS
- Tree canopy (map and percentage)
GOALS
<b>Improve health of watershed.</b>
METRICS
- Impervious surface (total and per capita)
- Creek health (percentage of assessed watersheds in excellent, very good, or good health)
GOALS
<b>Improve access to parks.</b>
METRICS
- Units within walking distance of parks (1/4 mile in urban core, 1/2 mile outside the urban core)

e. Include implementation strategies and approaches to promote interdepartmental, intergovernmental, and interagency coordination.

f. Calculate direct and indirect costs and savings from green infrastructure projects, when compared with traditional “gray” infrastructure, including the asset value of ecosystem services and contribution to long-term risk management.

g. Develop and implement unified, comprehensive land management of all City of Austin lands for integrated environmental sustainability, including carbon sequestration, wildlife habitat, water quality and quantity, and education.

h. Identify a lead to oversee ongoing implementation of the plan and program.

2. Assess options to coordinate and expand incentives for residential and commercial property owners to install green infrastructure elements, such as green roofs, rainwater harvesting, pervious pavement, and rain gardens.

#### **ONGOING AND LONG TERM (3+ YEARS)**

3. Provide guidance on best practices for property owners interested in green infrastructure improvements. Develop demonstration projects and share information with residents and business owners.

4. Continue funding support and acquisition of land in the Balcones Canyonlands Preserves and in other environmentally significant areas to protect water quality, conserve endangered species habitat, and provide open space for passive public use.

5. Protect farmland and conduct and stimulate research to facilitate growing techniques that minimize water usage and build healthy soils accounting for regional climate change.

6. Track and monitor citywide implementation of the green infrastructure plan, including planned parks and open space, green streets, and bicycle, pedestrian, and transit projects.

7. Make available dynamic, online, interactive maps of the existing and planned green infrastructure networks to allow the community to see the program’s progress.

8. Identify approaches to track and monitor the costs and savings associated with green infrastructure projects. Solicit research and funding partners, such as the University of Texas’ Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Research Center and The Trust for Public Lands.

9. Solicit partners, such as conservation and bicycle advocacy groups, to help implement the recommendations of the green infrastructure plan and program.

10. Hold public and educational events to share green infrastructure benefits and pursue program partnerships with local organizations.

**RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PRIORITY PROGRAMS:**

- Create a Healthy Austin Program. Investing in accessible walking and biking networks, community gardens, family farms, parks, and open space will provide Austin residents increased opportunities for outdoor exercise as well as contribute to healthy lifestyles by increasing access to local and nourishing food and reducing air pollution.
- Sustainably manage our water resources. Expanding Austin's green infrastructure will impact the City's ability to protect and conserve water resources. By increasing the urban tree canopy and decreasing stormwater runoff, the green infrastructure program will contribute to reducing flooding, improving water quality, and lessening the need for water treatment.
- Invest in a compact and connected Austin. The green infrastructure program will include priorities for trails and greenway networks that provide alternative ways to get around the city.
- Revise Austin's development regulations and processes to promote a compact and connected city. Green infrastructure and low-impact development standards should be included in the revised Land Development Code and Criteria Manuals.

**RELATED CITY INITIATIVES:**

- Austin Climate Protection Plan
- Austin Strategic Mobility Plan
- Bicycle Master Plan
- Central Texas Greenprint Plan
- Healthy Austin Code
- Invasive Species Management Plan
- Parks and Recreation Department Long Range Plan
- Trails Master Plan
- Travis County Colorado River Corridor Plan
- Urban Forestry Management Plan
- Urban Parks Workgroup Report
- Watershed Protection Master Plan
- Town Lake Plan



The Flaming Lips video shoot. Photo by Courtney Chavauell/Courtesy of Austin Studios.

## 5. Grow and invest in Austin’s creative economy.

Austin’s healthy economy stems, in large part, from its vibrant, local creative community and diverse workforce. Creative individuals (artists, musicians, film and digital media professionals, and other knowledge-based workers), cultural organizations, and creative businesses contribute to the region’s economic growth and quality of life. Continued strategic investment in these industries is needed to grow existing creative sector entrepreneurs, organizations and businesses, encourage “home-grown” start-ups, and attract new organizations, businesses, residents, and visitors who will contribute to a healthy economy.

### WORK PROGRAM

#### SHORT TERM (1-3 YEARS)

1. Survey creative arts and culture non-profits, organizations, and individuals to determine gaps in technical assistance and identify additional ongoing strategies to further develop the creative industries.
2. Develop and implement a cultural tourism and heritage plan to improve tourism offerings (such as technology and cultural diversity) at the regional, national, and global scales to stimulate trade and bring new resources to the community.
3. Develop and implement strategies to create and sustain the live music industry while addressing noise compatibility.
4. Conduct a creative facilities survey and analysis to determine both impediments, challenges, and positive influences in promoting Austin’s creative culture. Involve the creative community in its design and implementation.
5. Explore and re-imagine existing City development tools, such as incentives, regulations, and financing options, with a focus on creative industries’ facility needs. Expand access to affordable and functional studio, exhibition, performance space, museums, libraries, music venues, and office space.

#### ONGOING AND LONG TERM (3+ YEARS)

6. Use the City’s existing interdisciplinary team to better coordinate “creative enterprise” services, programs, and resources.
7. Cultivate relationships with local, national, and international businesses and organizations to expand and sustain the financial, artistic, and cultural excellence of the Austin music, film, digital industries, and nonprofit arts and culture communities.
8. Provide ongoing technical assistance, access to best practices, small business resources, and nonprofit organization resources with a focus on targeted creative industries and jobs.
9. Develop new financial resources and strategies to sustain and expand the creative industry sector.

#### LEAD

Economic Growth and Redevelopment Services Office

#### PARTNERS

City of Austin Planning and Development Review Department; City of Austin Transportation Department; Parks and Recreation Department; Austin Public Library; Community College and University Art and Music Departments; AISD Fine Arts Program

#### RELATED VISION COMPONENTS

Creative

Prosperous

Livable

Educated

#### RELATED POLICIES

LUT P10, P35, P37; E P1, P2, P5-P8, P11-P17; CFS P44; S P11-13, P15-P19; C P1-P19.

#### RELATED ACTIONS

LUT A29; HN A1, A3-A9, A16, A24; E A1-A6, A8-A13, A15, A18; S A31-A40, A43-A48; C A1-A19, A23.